

Remarks

Claims 31-51 are currently pending in this patent application. Claims 31, 38 and 45 are independent. Claims 31, 32, 38, 39, 45 and 46 are currently amended.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 31, 32, 35, 45, 46, 49 and 50 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson U.S. Patent No. 3,506,222 (“Anderson”) in view of Basiliere U.S. Patent No. 5,421,757 (“Basiliere”).

The present invention provides an emergency floatation system including at least one float for supporting the helicopter on water and an inflatable emergency life raft for rescuing and transporting stranded persons. The floatation system includes a plurality of configurations including: (1) a packed configuration in which the at least one float and the raft are deflated; (2) a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated, but the raft remains deflated; and (3) a fully deployed configuration in which the at least one float and the raft are inflated.

Claim 31 has been amended to recite a floatation system for a helicopter having landing skids, comprising at least one inflatable float attached to the landing skids for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water and an inflatable raft for transporting persons, *wherein the system includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.*

Anderson teaches an aircraft supporting device including a pair of inflatable floats attached to the landing skids. However, Anderson fails to teach the use of an inflatable raft for

transporting persons. Additionally, Anderson does not disclose a floatation system including a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.

The Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Anderson. Basiliere discloses a standalone rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers for supporting a person on water. Basiliere's standalone raft is not part of a floatation system that includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated. Moreover, there would be no motivation to combine Anderson and Basiliere because Anderson is directed exclusively to a floatation system for supporting a helicopter, while Basiliere is directed exclusively to a standalone rescue raft for supporting an injured person. Absent impermissible hindsight reasoning, one of ordinary skill in the art would have no motivation to add Basiliere's standalone rescue raft to the aircraft floatation system of Anderson. Even assuming that these references were properly combined, there is simply no teaching that the resultant system would be capable of assuming a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 31, 32, 35, 45, 46, 49 and 50 are not rendered obvious by Anderson in view of Basiliere.

The Office Action further rejects claims 38 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sims U.S. Patent No. 4,274,526 ("Sims") in view of Basiliere.

Claim 38 has been amended to recite a floatation system attached to a helicopter, comprising a girt attached to the helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to the at least one float, wherein the at least one float is adapted to support the helicopter and the raft is adapted to transport persons, *wherein the system includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.*

Sims discloses an inflatable device, such as an emergency evacuation slide device, that may be attached to the girt of a helicopter. However, Sims does not provide an inflatable raft for transporting persons. Additionally, Sims fails to teach a floatation system including a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.

The Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Sims. As discussed hereinabove with respect to claim 31, Basiliere discloses a standalone rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers for supporting a person on water. Basiliere's standalone raft is not part of a floatation system that includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated. Furthermore, there would be no motivation to combine Sims and Basiliere because Sims is directed exclusively to an emergency evacuation slide device, whereas Basiliere is directed exclusively to a standalone rescue raft for supporting an injured person. One of ordinary skill in the art would have no motivation to add Basiliere's standalone rescue raft to the emergency evacuation slide device of Sims absent impermissible hindsight reasoning. Assuming, *arguendo*, that these references were properly combined, there is still no teaching that the resultant system would be capable of assuming a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated. Additionally, there is no teaching regarding the attachment of the raft attached to the at least one float, as required by claim 38.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 38 and 39 are not rendered obvious by Sims in view of Basiliere.

The Office Action also rejects claims 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 46, 49 and 50 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller U.S. Patent No. 4,655,415 ("Miller") in view of Basiliere.

Claim 45 has been amended to recite a floatation system in combination with a helicopter landing skid, comprising at least one inflatable float attached to the landing skid and an inflatable raft, *wherein the system includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.*

Miller discloses a helicopter flotation pack including an inflatable flotation bladder secured to an intermediate structural member that includes a means for attachment to a helicopter landing skid. However, Miller does not disclose the use of an inflatable raft for transporting persons. Additionally, Miller fails to teach a floatation system including a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.

The Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Miller. As discussed hereinabove with respect to claims 31 and 38, Basiliere discloses a standalone rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers for supporting a person on water. Basiliere's standalone raft is not part of a floatation system that includes a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated. Furthermore, there would be no motivation to combine Miller and Basiliere because Miller is directed exclusively to a floatation system for a helicopter, while Basiliere is directed exclusively to a standalone rescue raft for supporting an injured person. One of ordinary skill in the art would have no motivation to add Basiliere's standalone rescue raft to the floatation system of Miller absent impermissible hindsight reasoning. Even assuming that these references were properly combined, there is still no teaching that the resultant system would be capable of assuming a partially deployed configuration in which the at least one float is inflated and the raft is deflated.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 46, 49 and 50 are not rendered obvious by Miller in view of Basiliere.

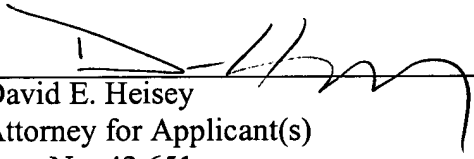
Conclusion

It is believed this amendment now has placed the application in condition for consideration and allowance. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-0683 of Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps.

Respectfully submitted,

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